

REMARKS

In view of the above amendment, Applicants believes the pending application is in condition for allowance. Claims 1-5, 7-10, 12-15, and 17-21 are now present in this application, of which claims 1 and 10 are independent. Claims 6, 11, and 16 have been canceled, claims 20 and 21 have been added, and claims 1, 7-10, 12-15, and 17-19 have been amended.

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Priority Under 35 U.S.C. § 119

Applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging Applicants' claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119, and receipt of the certified priority document.

Drawings

The Office Action indicates that the drawings are accepted by the Examiner and that no further action is necessary.

Nonstatutory Obviousness-Type Double Patenting Rejection

Claims 1, 2, 5, 10-12, and 15 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1, 2, 6, and 11-13 of copending Application No. 10/722,150.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 10-12, and 15 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-3, 7, and 8 of copending Application No. 10/722,443.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 10-12, and 15 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-3 and 9 of copending Application No. 10/722,455.

Because independent claims 1 and 10 have been amended to incorporate subject matter similar to dependent claims 6 and 16, Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection is mooted. In addition, Applicants note that Application No. 10/722,150 is directed to a patent application entitled

“TENSION-VARYING SLIDER FOR A SET OF THREE SLATS” that has issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,983,497 and is assigned on its face to Tournadre S.A. Standard Gum. Therefore the rejection using this application for obviousness-type double patenting is not applicable.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,256,823 to Kronbetter et al. ("Kronbetter"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In light of the foregoing amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections have been obviated and/or rendered moot. While not conceding to the Examiner's rejections, but merely to expedite prosecution, as the Examiner will note, independent claims 1 and 10 have been amended and that claims 6, 11, and 16 have been canceled.

Independent claim 1 is directed to a combination of elements in a gasket including, *inter alia*, “a ring protrusion protruding toward a center of the third opening between the one and the other ends of the leakage preventing part to block a gap between the second and third openings, the ring protrusion having a front end and a rear end closer to the drum than the front end, and an inside diameter of the front end of the protrusion being greater than that of the rear end of the protrusion.”

Independent claim 10 is directed to a combination of elements in a washing machine including, *inter alia*, “a ring protrusion protruding toward a center of the third opening between the one and the other ends of the leakage preventing part to block a gap between the second and third openings, the ring protrusion having a front end and a rear end closer to the drum than the front end, and an inside diameter of the front end of the protrusion being greater than that of the rear end of the protrusion.”

A complete discussion of the Examiner's rejection is set forth in the Office Action, and is not being repeated here. However, the Examiner alleges that “[a]s illustrated in Figure 2, the upper portion of Kronbetter’s protrusion parts 69, 71, 64 teaches that the front end of the protrusion 71 is equal to the outside diameter of the third opening; simultaneously, the inner side diameter of the front end of the protrusion 65 is also greater than the outside diameter of the third opening; and the

inner side diameter of the rear end of protrusion 64 is smaller than the inside diameter of the third opening.”

Applicants respectfully submit that by selecting different protrusions, the Examiner improperly reads Kronbetter onto the claims. For example, after clearly identifying annular ring 64 as the ring type protrusion, the Examiner relies on two additional parts as allegedly teaching ring type protrusions having the claimed feature (e.g. annular ring 71 and ribs 69, which are not part of annular ring 64). Furthermore, independent claims 1 and 10, as amended clarify that the ring protrusion must have a front end and a rear end, and of the front and rear ends of the protrusion, the rear end is closer to the drum. In addition, independent claims 1 and 10 make it clear that the front end of the ring protrusion has a larger inner diameter than the rear end.

In direct contrast, Kronbetter’s annular ring 64 has a front surface with an inner diameter that is smaller than an inner diameter of a rear surface of the annular ring 64. Furthermore, none of the other alleged protrusions, annular ring 71 and protrusions 69, show or describe the claimed ring protrusion.

For at least this reason, Kronbetter fails to anticipate independent claims 1 and 10, and therefore the § 102 rejections must be withdrawn.

With regard to dependent claims 2-5, 7-9, 12-15, and 17-19, Applicants submit that these claims depend, either directly or indirectly, from one of independent claims 1 and 10, which are allowable for the reasons set forth above, and therefore these claims are allowable based on their dependencies from one of claims 1 and 10, as well as for their additionally recited subject matter.

Reconsideration and allowance thereof are respectfully requested.

Claims 20 and 21

Claims 20 and 21 have been added for the Examiner's consideration. Applicants submit that claims 20 and 21 depend directly from one of independent claims 1 or 10 and are therefore allowable based on their dependence from one of claim 1 or 10, which are believed to be allowable.

In addition, claims 20 and 21 recite further limitations that are not disclosed or made obvious by the applied prior art references.

Additional Cited References

Since the remaining references cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but have merely been cited to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

Office Action

The Office Action contains numerous characterizations of the invention, the claims, and the related art, with which Applicants do not necessarily agree. Unless expressly noted otherwise, Applicants decline to subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone Chad D. Wells, Registration No. 50,875, at (703) 205-8000, in the Washington, D.C. area.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

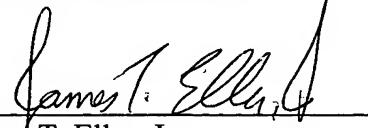
Application No. 10/722,426
Amendment dated January 16, 2006
Reply to Office Action of September 13, 2006

Docket No.: 0465-1096P

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: January 16, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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